



# BHFNC Top tips to promote walking to school

To coincide with Living Streets' International Walk to School Month

September 2010

## October is International Walk to School Month

Every October Living Streets' Walk to School Month brings schools from across the world together to promote walking to school.

The BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health has looked at common barriers to walking to school and put together a range of tips to support teachers and other professionals in overcoming these barriers and encourage active travel among staff, pupils and their families. These tips were adapted from the popular BHF Active School Pack. For further information on the Active School Pack, and to get your copy, click [here](#)

### Top tips to promote walking to school

**Barrier: Concerns about road safety including high volumes of traffic, traffic travelling too fast, difficulties crossing roads.**

Top tips for overcoming this barrier:

- Encourage and help pupils and parents to identify 'Safe Routes' to school – this could be a project for pupils.
- Make the roads/car parks in and around the school as safe as possible – e.g. check parents don't park on the zigzags outside the school gates.
- Encourage parents who do have to drop children by car to switch off their engines while waiting outside the school.
- Give priority to pedestrians on the school site - this could include having a separate traffic-free entrance for walkers (and cyclists); and installing traffic-calming measures on any roads or car-parks on school grounds.
- Contact the Local Council with concerns about road safety issues, highlighting particular concerns (or better still, get the pupils to do it). Encourage parents to do the same.
- Include some work on road safety in lessons and consider inviting the local Road Safety Officer in to talk to pupils.

**Barrier: Many parents drop-off children on their way to work or other commitments and feel they don't have time to walk.**

Top tips for overcoming this barrier:

- Encourage schemes to help parents of primary school pupils who are unable to walk to school with their children e.g. walking bus. The walking bus could use a trolley to help carry bags.
- Highlight to parents that walking could end up being just as quick, if not quicker, than travelling by car – you don't need to worry about unlocking the car, organising seat belts etc. Also, you don't get held up in traffic queues or need to find a parking space.
- Some parents will have to drive to school - encourage them to park a little distance away from the school and walk the remaining distance.

**Barrier: Fear of 'stranger danger' is a major obstruction to parents letting older children walk to school unaccompanied.**

Top tips for overcoming this barrier:

- Promote 'Walking Buddies' idea - encourage children and young people to walk to school with friends or older siblings. Younger children may need to be accompanied by parents/carers or older siblings.
- Encourage parents to help make their children 'streetwise' by talking through potential problems with them and how they should react. Teachers could discuss with pupils 'safe' people and places they could turn to if they are worried when walking to/from school.
- Identify 'safe' places and people along routes most frequently used by children and young people and where they could go if they feel worried about anything (e.g. local shops, library, community centre).

Walk to School Month runs over the whole of October which means you can take part whenever suits you. To visit the Walk to School website, click [here](#).